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Secretariat

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INFORMATION CIRCULAR

To: Members of the staff

From: The Assistant Secretary-General for Human Resources Management

Subject: STATUS REPORT, REQUEST FOR PAYMENT OF DEPENDENCY BENEFITS AND HOUSING ASSISTANCE INFORMATION*

1. All staff members on the Headquarters payroll, other than short-term staff, are required to complete the annual status report and request for payment of dependency benefits (form P.84 (1-91)), which will be distributed by the departmental executive or administrative officer. Each form is printed with the name, index number and other relevant information relating to the staff member's situation as of 31 December 1990.

2. Each staff member, whether or not he/she has dependants, must complete the introductory section of the form and sign section VI. Staff who received dependency benefits for 1990 or wish to claim dependency benefits for 1990 or 1991 should also complete section I of the form, and, as appropriate, sections II, III and IV. On the back of the form is information intended to assist staff members in submitting their claims. This information as well as paragraphs 6 to 20 below should be read carefully before completing these sections of the form.

3. Staff who receive post adjustment or a monthly mission allowance must complete section V of the form concerning housing assistance information. There is an explanatory note on the back of the form concerning this section.

4. After they have completed and signed the form, staff members are requested to return it to their executive or administrative officer as soon as possible, but not later than 1 May 1991.

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* Personnel Manual index No. 3340.

5. Staff members are responsible under the Staff Rules for promptly notifying the Secretary-General in writing of any changes in their marital or dependency status. Such notification of changes which occur during the year should be made in writing to the executive or administrative officer concerned for referral to the Allowances and Benefits Unit, Office of Human Resources Management.

Dependent spouse

6. A dependent spouse of a staff member is defined in staff rule 103.24 (a). A dependent spouse is a spouse who has no occupational earnings or whose gross occupational earnings do not exceed the earnings limit established for this purpose in rule 103.24. This earnings limit is the gross salary of the lowest entry level of the General Service salary scale applicable at the spouse's place of work. In addition, in the case of a spouse of a staff member in the Professional category and above, the spouse's occupational earnings may not exceed the gross salary of G-2, step 1, for New York for recognition as a dependent spouse.

7. For New York, the earnings limit for 1990 was $23,058 gross per year, and for 1991 it is $24,538 gross per year (the gross salary in effect on 1 January of the year concerned for a staff member at G-2, step 1). For other duty stations, the earnings limit is equivalent to the lowest entry level of the United Nations General Service salary scales, effective 1 January 1990 or 1991, as appropriate, for the duty station concerned.

8. Staff in the General Service and related categories will receive for a dependent spouse the spouse allowance established for the duty station. Staff in the Professional category and above and in the Field Service category will receive a dependency benefit in the form of salary and post adjustment at the dependency rates. The amount of this benefit is the difference between salary and post adjustment at the single rates and salary and post adjustment at the dependency rates.

9. When the spouse's occupational earnings exceed the established earnings limit, no dependency benefit (spouse allowance or dependency rates of salary and post adjustment) will be paid in his/her respect. However, an adjusted dependency benefit may be paid when the spouse's gross occupational earnings are less than the sum of the earnings limit and the appropriate dependency benefit. The adjusted benefit will be equal to the amount by which the sum of the earnings limit and the appropriate dependency benefit exceeds the spouse's gross occupational earnings.

10. In accordance with paragraph 5 above, it is the staff member's responsibility to report promptly any change in the occupational earnings of the spouse, which may affect his or her dependency status. The status report form (P.84 1-91), which will be distributed, requires that, in cases where the staff member was paid a dependency benefit and where his/her spouse received occupational earnings in 1990, proof of earnings such as the W-2 forms or copy of the tax return be attached to the form itself before it is returned to the executive or administrative officer. Where a dependency benefit was paid in respect of a spouse on the basis of estimated occupational earnings for 1990 but the actual occupational earnings during that year were in excess of the established level, the overpayment will be

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recovered from the staff member's salary. Conversely, where a dependency benefit was not paid because the estimated earnings exceeded the established level but the actual earnings were below that level, such benefit will be paid to the staff member retroactively.

Dependent children

11. As defined in staff rule 103.24 (b) and paragraph 3 of administrative instruction ST/AI/278/Rev.1 on definition of dependency status, the following children may be eligible for dependency status:

(a) A staff member's natural child;

(b) A staff member's legally adopted child;

(c) A staff member's stepchild, if residing with the staff member;

(d) If legal adoption of the child is not possible because there is no statutory provision for adoption or any prescribed court procedure for formal recognition of customary or de facto adoption in the staff member's home country or country of permanent residence, then a child in respect of whom the following conditions are met:

(i) The child resides with the staff member;

(ii) The staff member can be regarded as having established a parental relationship with the child;

(iii) The child is not a brother or sister of the staff member;

(iv) The number of children for which dependency benefits are claimed by the staff member under this subparagraph does not exceed three.

12. For any of the above-mentioned children to be recognized as a staff member's dependent child, the following requirements must be met:

(a) (i) The child must be under the age of 18 years;

(ii) If the child is 18 years or more but under the age of 21 years, he/she must be in full-time attendance at a school or university (or similar institution);

(b) The staff member must provide main and continuing support to the child.

The age and school attendance requirements indicated under (a) above will be waived if a child is physically or mentally incapacitated for substantial gainful employment, either permanently or for a period expected to be of long duration.

13. A children's allowance is payable for each dependent child of a staff member. In the case of staff in the General Service and related categories, the amount of

the children's allowance is established on a duty station-by-duty station basis. In the case of staff in the Professional category and above and in the Field Service category the amount of the children's allowance is that established in staff regulation 3.4. However, in the case of a staff member in the Professional category and above or in the Field Service category who has no dependent spouse, the staff member will receive for the first child, in lieu of the children's allowance, the dependency rates of salary and post adjustment. This benefit is granted subject to paragraph 14 below.

14. Staff rule 103.17 (b) (ii) and staff rule 103.7 (b) (i) require for payment of a dependency benefit in respect of a child in the form of salary and post adjustment at the dependency rates that the staff member provide substantial and continuing support to one or more of his/her children. For the provision of such support to be recognized, the sum of the staff member's (a) gross salary less the difference between the single and dependency rates of net salary and (b) post adjustment at the single rate must not be less than two thirds of the gross occupational earnings of his or her spouse. If this requirement is not met, the staff member will receive salary and post adjustment at the single rate and dependency allowance for the child.

15. If a staff member or his or her spouse receives a dependency benefit in the form of a government grant in respect of a child, the amount is subtracted from any dependency benefit payable by the United Nations in respect of that child. The amount of any such grant received in respect of each child should be indicated on the bottom line of part III of the form.

16. It is the staff member's responsibility to give written notice to the Allowance and Benefits Unit if his or her child marries. If the staff member continues to claim the child as a dependant, documentary evidence satisfactory to the Secretary-General is required under paragraph 18 below for the child to continue to be recognized as his/her dependant.

17. It is also the staff member's responsibility to give written notice to the Allowance and Benefits Unit if his or her child ceases to be in full-time attendance at an educational institution. The staff member is required to submit a certificate of school attendance for his or her dependent child between the ages of 18 and 21 at the end of each school year, even if the staff member does not receive an education grant. While an effort will be made to remind staff members of this obligation, failure to submit the school certificate will result in discontinuance of the dependency benefits and in recovery of any overpayment. The dependency status of a child between the ages of 18 and 21 continues through a period of vacation only if the child enrols for full-time attendance after the vacation. Otherwise, the dependency status ceases as of the last day of attendance of the preceding school term.

18. In addition to the staff member's certification that he or she provides main and continuing support, documentary evidence of such support satisfactory to the Secretary-General will always be required if a child:

(a) Does not reside with the staff member because of divorce or legal separation;

(b) Is married;

(c) Is regarded as a dependent child under paragraph 3 (d) of administrative instruction ST/AI/278/Rev.1.

Secondary dependant

19. A dependency allowance is payable in respect of only one secondary dependant. It is not payable for a secondary dependant if the staff member is already receiving dependency benefits in respect of a dependent spouse. A secondary dependant may be the father, mother, brother or sister of the staff member of whose financial support the staff member provides one half or more, and, in any case, at least twice the amount of the dependency allowance. In the case of a brother or sister, he/she must be under the age of 18 or, if in full-time attendance at a school or university (or similar educational institution), under the age of 21. However, if the brother or sister is physically or mentally incapacitated for substantial gainful employment, either permanently or for a period expected to be of long duration, the requirements as to age and school attendance will be waived.

20. The initial claim for a secondary dependant allowance must be accompanied by a birth certificate of the secondary dependant and evidence of the financial support provided to him/her by the staff member. Evidence of such continuing support may also be required to substantiate subsequent claims.

Designation of beneficiary

21. Staff members are required under staff rule 112.5 to notify the Secretary-General of any revocations or changes of beneficiaries. A beneficiary for the purposes of the rule is designated at the time of appointment on the "Designation, change or revocation of beneficiary" form (P.2 (10-83)). Staff members, particularly those who made the designation at the time of their appointment many years ago, are urged to find out through their personnel officer whether their original designation is still correct and to alter the designation of their beneficiaries if they wish.

22. It is also suggested that staff members take this opportunity to ascertain whether their original designation of beneficiaries for the United Nations Joint Staff Pension Fund and for the Group Life Insurance Plan are similarly correct. Notification of changes should be sent to the Secretary of the Pension Fund, room S-765, or to the Insurance Section, room S-2755, as appropriate.